

New Hampshire CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES



*Supporting Families
with Children*



Your Child Support Dictionary

ARREARAGES – Child support that was not paid when due

CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES – A calculation table available in booklet format or on the DCSS website, which provides guideline support amounts based upon income and expenses of both parents

CHILD SUPPORT ORDER – A court or administrative order for the amount of child support to be paid

CHILD SUPPORT – A way for parents to share the responsibility of providing financial and medical support for their child

CURRENT SUPPORT – The ongoing dollar amount to be paid as stated in a legal order

DCSS – Division of Child Support Services

DHHS – Department of Health and Human Services

EFT – Electronic Fund Transfer, also known as direct deposit

INTERSTATE CASE – A case in which DCSS works with another child support agency to establish or enforce a court order when a parent responsible for paying child support resides in another state

LIEN – A legal claim against personal or real property to pay child support arrearages

MEDICAID – State health care assistance

PATERNITY TEST – Genetic test to determine the biological father of a child

PAYEE – The person that receives child support payments

PAYOR – The person responsible for paying child support

SDU – State Disbursement Unit which receives, records and disburses child support payments to a payee

TANF – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Cash Assistance)

Introduction

This brochure explains child support services. These services are available even if one of the parents lives in another state, and include:

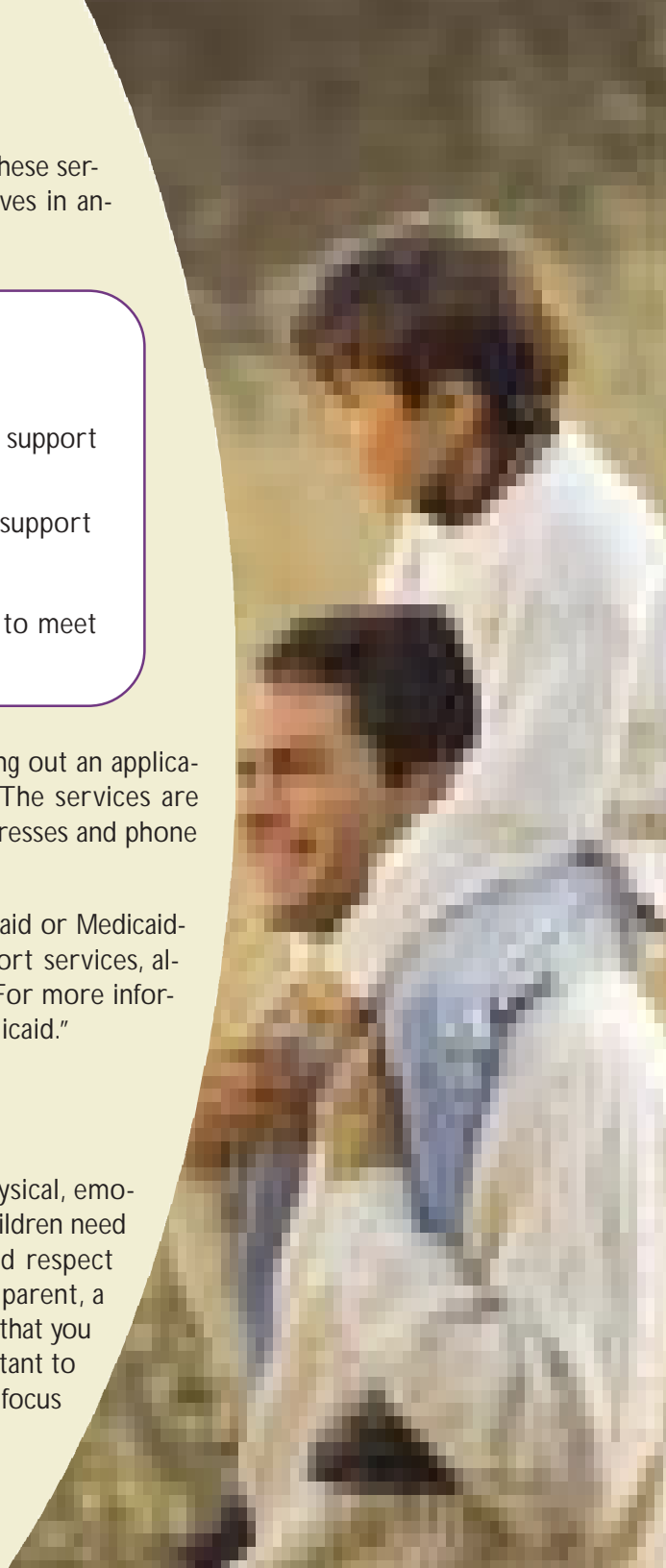
- Locating the responsible parent
- Determining paternity for a child
- Establishing a financial and/or medical child support order
- Collecting and distributing financial child support
- Enforcing a child support order
- Reviewing an order to see if it continues to meet guideline amounts

You can apply for child support services by filling out an application at the DHHS district office nearest you. The services are intended to benefit children. District office addresses and phone numbers are listed on the back page.

If you receive TANF cash assistance with Medicaid or Medicaid-Only, you will automatically receive child support services, although you will have to fill out an application. For more information, see the section called "TANF and Medicaid."

PARENTHOOD

As a parent, you are responsible for giving physical, emotional, and financial support to your children. Children need two involved parents that are role models and respect each other. When interacting with the other parent, a positive and polite attitude shows your children that you care about their feelings and that they are important to you. Your children benefit the most when your focus is on them.





What to Expect

In NH, the court establishes the child support order, including decisions on where the children will reside. DCSS will enforce your financial and medical child support order only. Custody and visitation issues are between the parents and the court. (For more information, see the section titled, “Enforcing an Order.”) DCSS will send collected child support directly to the payee identified in the order. In addition, DCSS will, as appropriate, forward payments or portions of payments to other parties, such as the State of New Hampshire, another state, or another person. While DCSS will always try to enforce Child Support, we may not always be successful.

DCSS cannot represent you. DCSS represents the State of New Hampshire. DCSS can explain the court process to you and help you understand the paperwork, but we cannot give you legal advice. For the most effective case management, DCSS must decide what actions to take. If you do not agree with a DCSS decision, you have the right to hire your own attorney or represent yourself.

Child support is generally paid until the youngest child turns 18 or graduates from high school, whichever occurs last. Child support will also end when a child joins the military or marries.

If one parent lives in another state, the DCSS Interstate Child Support Unit may work with other state child support agencies to establish and enforce a child support order.

Locating a Parent

You can help DCSS locate a parent by giving as much information as possible to your child support worker, such as:

- Name and nicknames
- Social Security Number and date of birth
- Previous addresses
- Bank and credit union accounts
- Names and addresses of family, friends, and current/previous employers
- Property and assets such as cars (make, model, color, year, license plate state and number), land, houses, boats, snowmobiles, business property and equipment, and other valuables

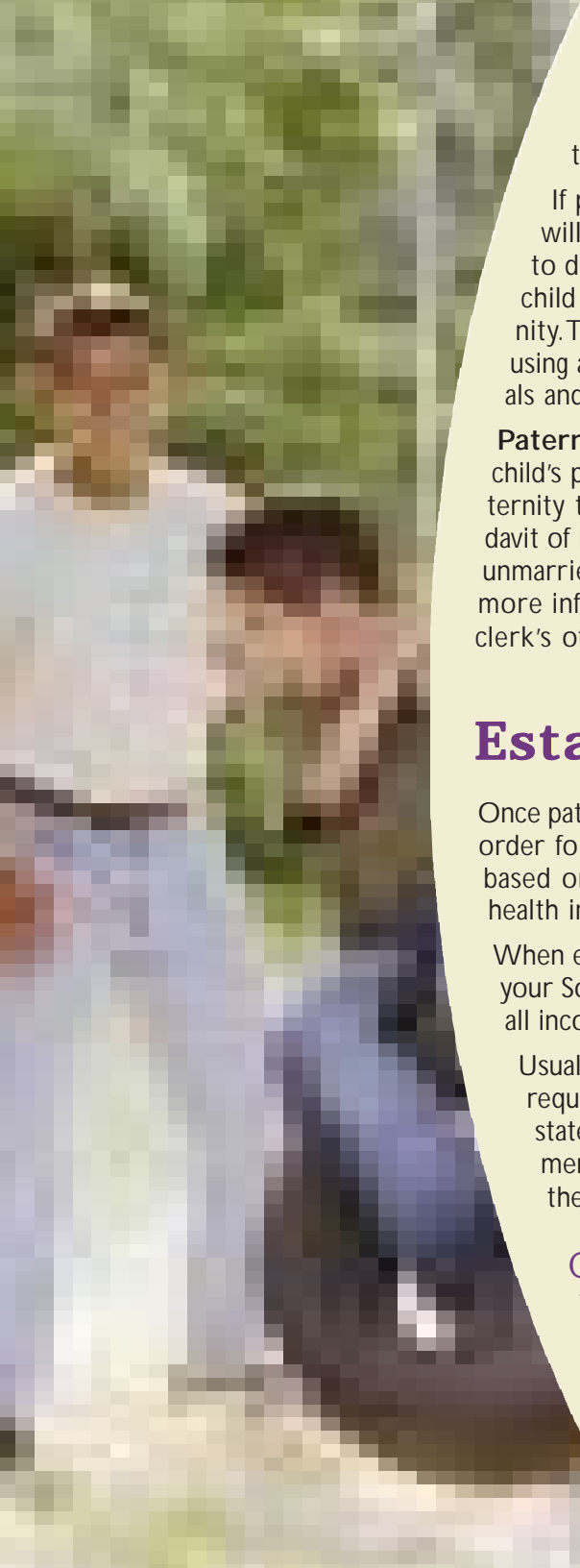
Some of the information above can be found on old income tax returns, bank statements, paycheck stubs, insurance forms, union membership cards, driver's licenses, and loan or credit card applications or statements.

Determining Paternity

DCSS must know who the child's father is in order to establish a support order. If the parents were not married at the time of the child's birth, paternity should be established as early as possible. By establishing paternity your child benefits:

- Financially, through qualifying for child support, certain disability benefits, and inheritance rights
- Medically, through rights to the father's health insurance benefits and information about his health
- Emotionally, through a sense of identity and security





To determine paternity, DCSS will need information about the child's father and the relationship between the parents at the time of the child's conception or birth.

If paternity is not recorded on a birth certificate, DCSS will have to prove paternity and may use genetic testing to do so. If genetic testing is needed, both parents and the child will need to be tested to accurately determine paternity. Testing involves a sample of DNA from the mouth area using a cotton swab. The test is done by medical professionals and is painless.

Paternity Determination without the court - When the child's parents are unmarried and want to legally establish paternity they can do so in court or they can complete an Affidavit of Paternity. The Affidavit of Paternity is a simple way for unmarried parents to establish paternity for their child. For more information contact any birthing hospital, town or city clerk's office or a DCSS District Office.

Establishing an Order

Once paternity is determined, DCSS will work to establish a legal order for support in court. The amount of the court order is based on both parents' income, ability to pay, and access to health insurance for your child.

When establishing an order for the first time, be sure to bring your Social Security Number, your child's birth certificate, and all income information.

Usually, when a court order is established, one parent will be required to pay child support in the amount and frequency stated in the order. DCSS sends collected child support payments to the payee within two business days of receiving the payment.

CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES

The amount of current child support owed is calculated in accordance with the New Hampshire Child Support Guidelines, which are set by state law. The court will order this amount, unless the court finds that the amount would be unjust or inappropriate due to special circumstances.

Enforcing an Order

Most child support payments are paid through income assignment where a portion of the payor's paycheck is withheld and sent to the DCSS State Disbursement Unit (SDU). The SDU processes and sends the money to the payee by check or Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). When payments are not paid, are not paid on time, or are not paid in full (according to the court order), DCSS will take enforcement action. It is important that you understand that DCSS or the court, *not* the payee, decides the type and level of enforcement action.

To enforce payment of arrearages, DCSS may:

File Liens against a payor's Personal & Real Property – Includes financial accounts, real estate holdings, personal possessions of value, etc.

Intercept a payor's Tax Refunds – Tax return money is sent directly to DCSS

Inform Credit Bureaus – Provide the amount of the arrearages to credit bureaus

Take a portion of a payor's Unemployment Compensation Benefits

Suspend a License – Notify a licensing board to suspend, deny, or take back a payor's license, including:

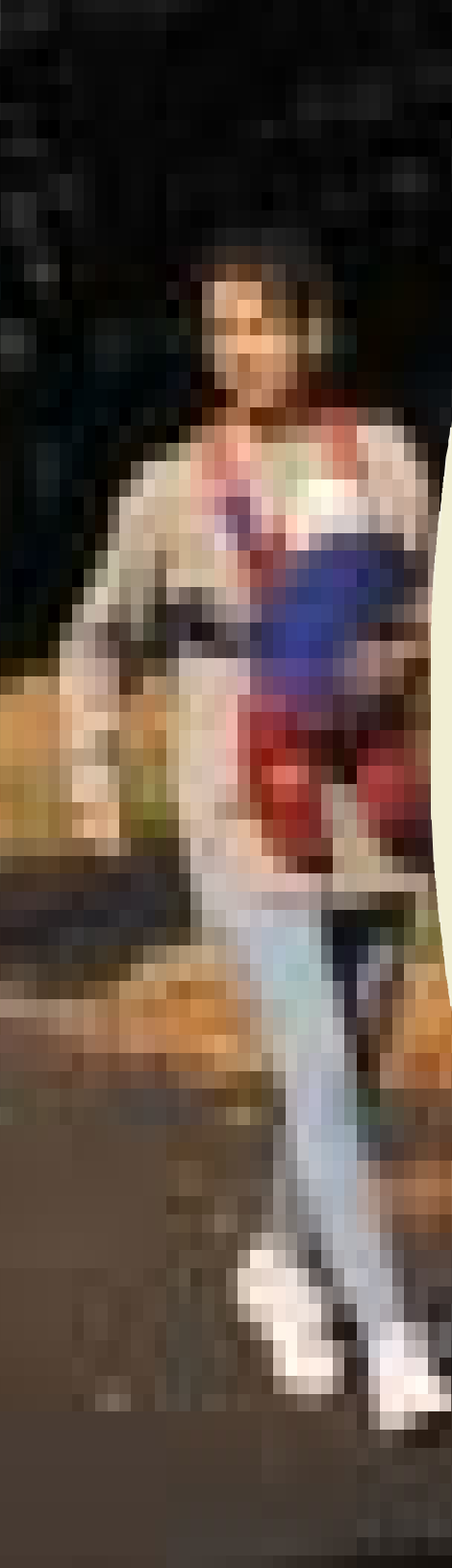
- Driver's
- Occupational/Professional (medical, plumbing, teaching, cosmetology, etc)
- Sporting (hunting and fishing)

Request Passport Denial – Notify the federal passport agency to deny a passport

Intercept Lottery Prizes – Take the portion of a lottery prize equal to the amount of the arrearage

Schedule a Court Hearing – DCSS presents the arrearage history to the court for the judge to decide next steps which may include immediate payment or, in certain cases, incarceration





Successful enforcement depends on the quality of the information available. Accurate information about the payor's address, phone number, occupation and income can all affect enforcement activity. Further, the payor's employment status impacts the ability to pay child support. You can help DCSS enforce your order by providing new information as it becomes available.

Changing Your Order

Either parent may ask DCSS or the court to review their child support order to find out if it should be raised or lowered based on New Hampshire Guidelines. Upon written request, DCSS will review your order if:

- It has been three years since your order was issued or modified
- Either parent's financial situation, has changed significantly since their order was issued or modified
- Medical support is not included in your current order

When modifying your order, you should bring all previous child support or divorce orders with you.

Both parents **must** provide current information about income and expenses or DCSS cannot review the order and recalculate the amount. If DCSS is provided with the information and determines that the order should be adjusted up or down, in accordance with the New Hampshire Guidelines, we will file the necessary papers with the court. If either parent does not agree with the new amount or fails to provide the information, either parent may go to court on their own and ask the court to change the order. Please remember that DCSS cannot represent you.

TANF and Medicaid

If you receive TANF cash assistance with Medicaid or Medicaid-Only, you must:

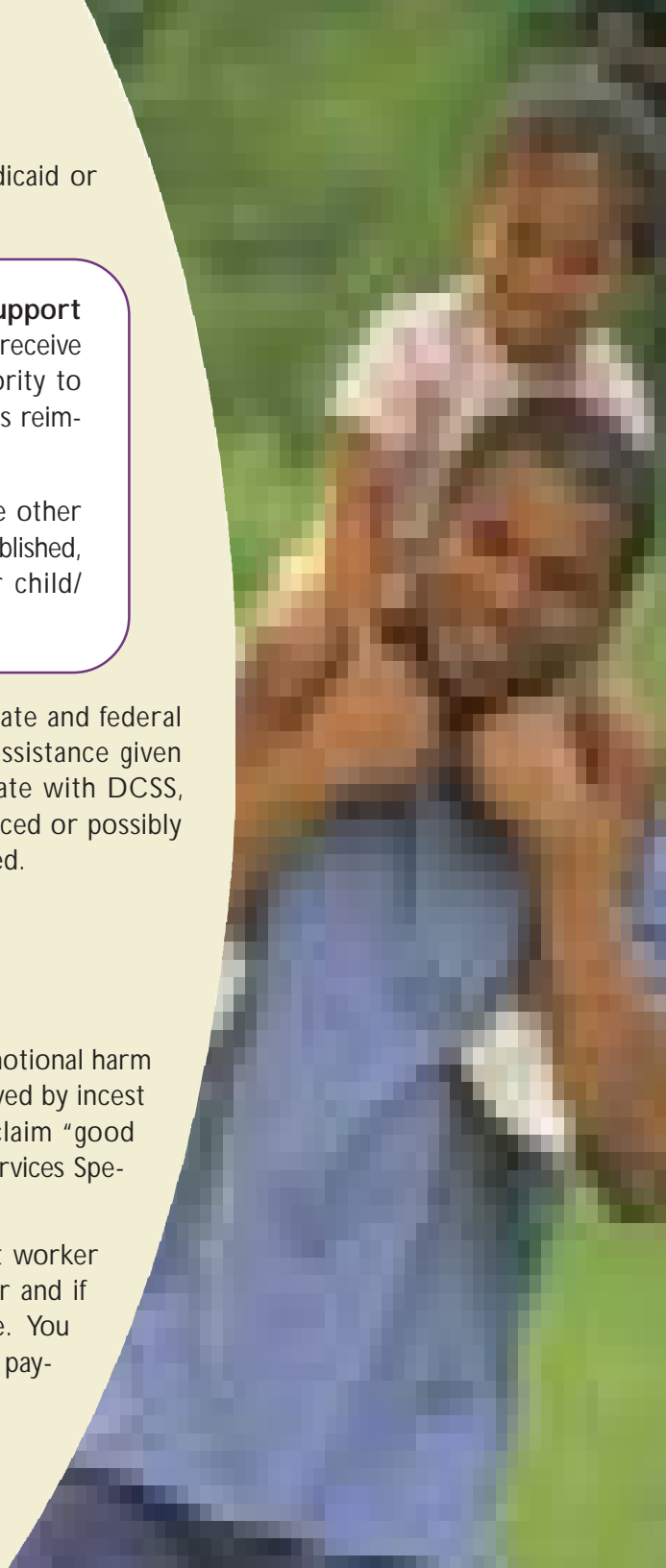
- **Assign your rights to child/spousal support and/or medical support.** – When you receive TANF with Medicaid, DCSS has the authority to collect and keep your support payments as reimbursement for assistance provided
- **Cooperate with DCSS** – To locate the other parent, establish paternity if not already established, and establish and enforce an order for child/medical support

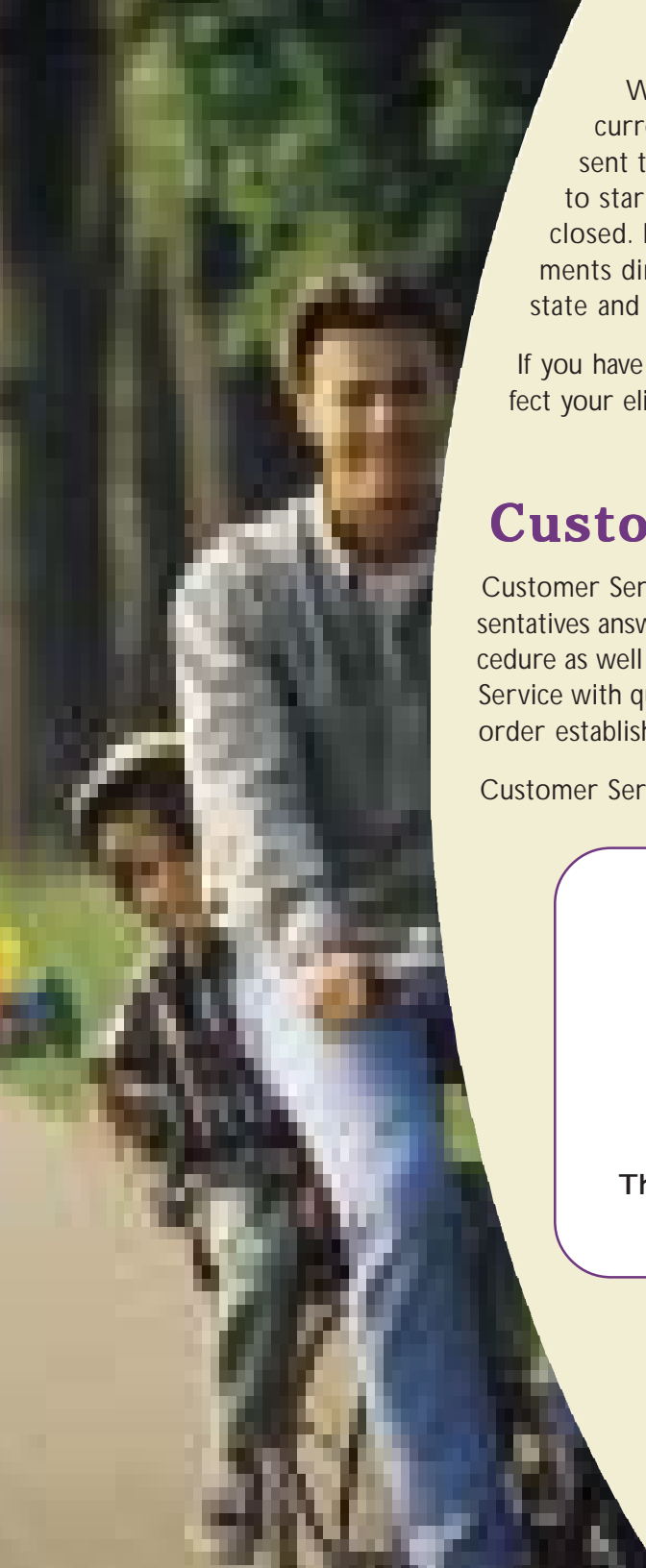
Any support collected may be used by the state and federal government to repay the cash and medical assistance given to you and your child. If you do not cooperate with DCSS, your TANF and Medicaid benefits will be reduced or possibly ended. Your child's benefits will not be affected.

GOOD CAUSE

If working with DCSS may cause physical or emotional harm to you or your child, or your child was conceived by incest or rape, or your child is adopted, you can claim "good cause." For more details, contact your Family Services Specialist (FSS) or your child support worker.

You must tell your FSS and your child support worker if you receive support directly from the payor and if there is any change in the amount you receive. You must cooperate in making your child support payments payable through DCSS.





When you stop receiving TANF cash assistance, current support payments received by DCSS will be sent to you. It usually takes a few weeks for payments to start coming to you after your TANF case has been closed. However, even if you get current support payments directly, DCSS may continue to try to collect any state and federal assistance given to you and your child.

If you have questions about how child support payments affect your eligibility for TANF or Medicaid, contact your FSS.

Customer Service

Customer Service is the central contact for DCSS. The representatives answer general program questions on policy and procedure as well as case specific questions. You can call Customer Service with questions regarding payments, case status, support order establishment, and address or employer changes.

Customer Service representatives are available:

**MONDAY through FRIDAY
from 9:00am to 4:15pm at:**

800 - 852 - 3345 x 4427

OR

(603) 271- 4427

Fax (603) 271- 4787

Through e-mail on the DHHS Website:

www.dhhs.nh.gov

Voice Response System

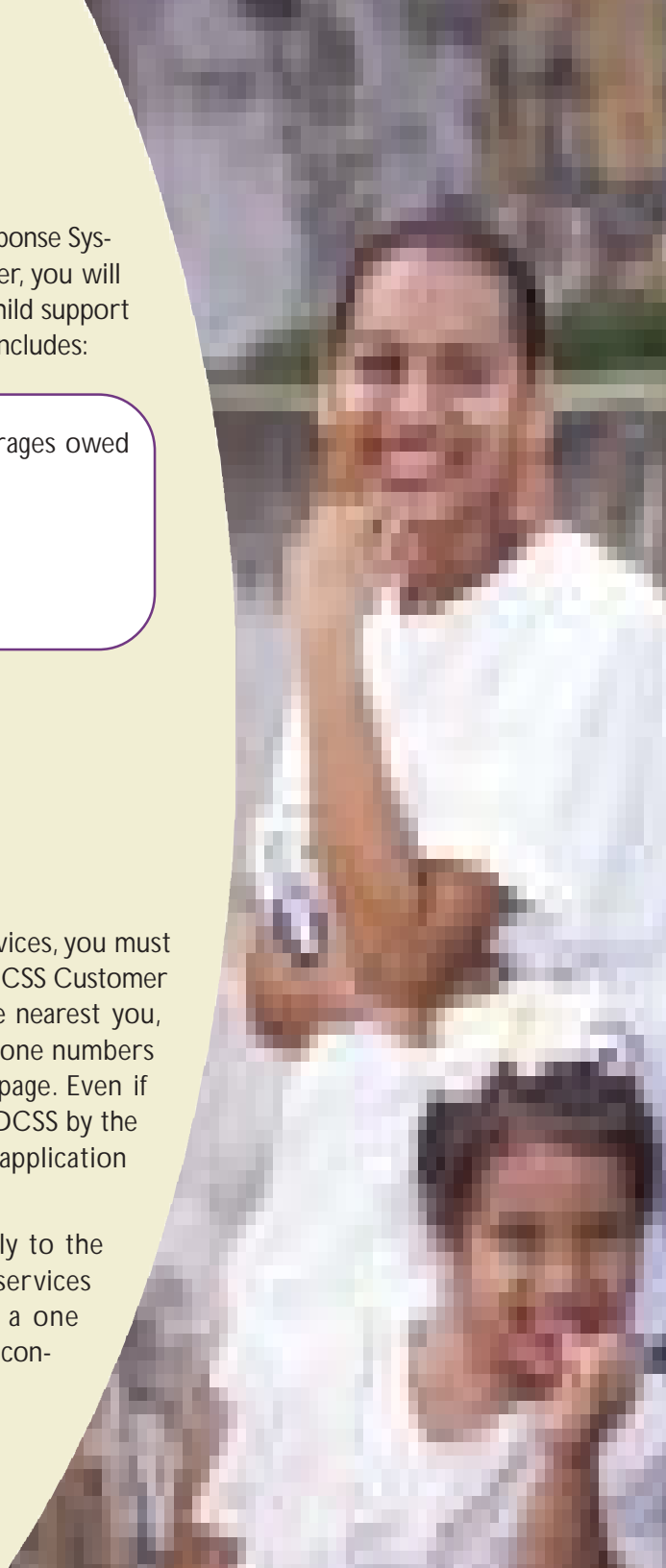
Also available is a 24 hour, 7 day a week Voice Response System at 800-371-8844. When you call this number, you will be given current payment information on your child support case. The information, also available in Spanish, includes:

- Last month's summary balance and arrearages owed
- Last five payments
- Last payment received
- Date of the last payment

Applying for Child Support Services

If you would like to apply for child support services, you must complete an application which is available from DCSS Customer Service at (603) 271-4427, at the district office nearest you, at the court or by e-mail. The addresses and phone numbers of the district offices are listed on the back page. Even if your child support is ordered payable through DCSS by the court, you must still complete and submit an application to DCSS.

If the child support is ordered payable directly to the payee, DCSS can only provide child support services under certain circumstances, such as when a one month arrearage exists. For further information, contact DCSS Customer Service.



CHILD SUPPORT DISTRICT OFFICES

BERLIN DISTRICT OFFICE

231 Main Street
Berlin, NH 03570 -2463
(603) 752-7800 or 1-800-972-6111
FAX (603) 752-2230

CLAREMONT DISTRICT OFFICE

17 Water Street, Suite 301
Claremont, NH 03743-2280
(603) 542-9544 or 1-800-982-1001
FAX (603) 543-8918

CONCORD DISTRICT OFFICE

40 Terrill Park Drive
Concord, NH 03301-7325
(603) 271-3604 or 1-800-322-9191
FAX (603) 271-6206

CONWAY DISTRICT OFFICE

73 Hobbs Street
Conway, NH 03818-6188
(603) 447-3841 or 1-800-552-4628
FAX (603) 447-1988

KEENE DISTRICT OFFICE

809 Court Street
Keene, NH 03431-1712
(603) 357-3510 or 1-800-624-9700
FAX (603) 355-1542

LACONIA DISTRICT OFFICE

65 Beacon Street West
Laconia, NH 03246-3428
(603) 524-4485 or 1-800-322-2121
FAX (603) 528-4105

LITTLETON DISTRICT OFFICE

80 North Littleton Road
Littleton, NH 03561-3814
(603) 444-6786 or 1-800-552-8959
FAX (603) 444-0348

MANCHESTER DISTRICT OFFICE

195 McGregor Street, Suite 110
Manchester, NH 03102-3762
(603) 668-2330 or 1-800-852-7493
FAX (603) 668-5442

NASHUA DISTRICT OFFICE

19 Chestnut Street
Nashua, NH 03060-3366
(603) 883-7726 or 1-800-852-0632
FAX (603) 883-0528

PORTSMOUTH DISTRICT OFFICE

30 Maplewood Avenue, Suite 200
Portsmouth, NH 03801-3737
(603) 433-8346 or 1-800-821-0326
FAX (603) 559-8495

ROCHESTER DISTRICT OFFICE

150 Wakefield Street, Suite 22
Rochester, NH 03867-1309
(603) 332-9120 or 1-800-862-5300
FAX (603) 335-5993

SALEM DISTRICT OFFICE

154 Main Street, Suite 1
Salem, NH 03079-3191
(603) 893-9763 or 1-800-852-7492
FAX (603) 893-5894

INTERSTATE UNIT DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

129 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301-3857
(603) 271-4431 or 1-800-852-3345 Ext. 4431
FAX (603) 271-4771

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Child Support Services

129 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-4427 or 1-800-852-3345 Ext. 4427
FAX (603) 271-4787
www.dhhs.nh.gov



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